

## Biography Jerry E. Abramson, Mayor of Louisville

Five times, citizens elected Jerry Abramson as Mayor of Louisville, earning him the nickname “Mayor for Life” and the distinction of being the longest serving mayor in the city’s 231-year history.

Over 20 years, Abramson has overseen a dramatic transformation of the community that includes investing millions to improve public safety, creating jobs with the expansion of Louisville’s airport and the renaissance of the city’s waterfront and downtown, enlarging the park system and reducing the size of government.

Abramson, who served three terms as leader of the City of Louisville in the 1980s and 1990s, led the successful effort to unify city and county governments into a single, more efficient government. He was elected the first Mayor of Louisville Metro in November 2002 with nearly 74 percent of the vote, and now represents 700,000 citizens.

The past 6 \_ years have been marked by dramatic progress that helped Louisville earn the designation “Most Livable Large City in America” from the U.S. Conference of Mayors. The progress includes:

- **Reducing the size of government** by nearly 20 percent while improving the delivery of basic services
- **Making citizens safer**, adding police officers and launching MetroSafe – a \$70 million communications network that links more than 4,000 police, fire, EMS and other emergency responders throughout the region.
- **Jumpstarting the renaissance downtown** that has added developments such as 4th Street Live, the Frazier International History Museum, the Muhammad Ali Center, new and expanded hotels and more. The new riverfront arena is the highlight of nearly \$2.5 billion in projects underway or planned that also include the Center City retail and entertainment district expansion, Museum Plaza skyscraper, housing, and expansion of the downtown medical center.
- **Keeping Louisville’s economy moving** by attracting and creating new jobs, with initiatives in the life-sciences area and an award-winning program to support the community’s fastest-growing local companies.
- **Redefining Louisville as a “City of Parks,”** leading the development of the award-winning Waterfront Park, adding 4,000 acres of suburban parkland through a public-private partnership, developing a 100-mile Louisville Loop trail and investing millions of dollars in improvements to existing parks.
- **Developing Liberty Green**, a \$230 million transformation of the former Clarksdale public housing project east of downtown into a mixed-income neighborhood. It’s a public-private partnership that is adding hundreds of additional new and rehabilitated housing units in nearby neighborhoods.
- **Improving public health** by establishing a new community-wide Emergency Medical Service to shave life-saving seconds off response times, and launching a Healthy Hometown Movement with community partners to cut high rates of obesity, diabetes, heart disease and cancer. Stricter anti-pollution rules have improved air quality outside and a community-wide smoking ban has improved air inside public places.

Abramson's tenure as mayor of the City of Louisville from 1985-1998 was marked by historic growth and economic progress in his hometown. Accomplishments included:

- Leading a \$700 million expansion of Louisville International Airport, resulting in dramatically improved airline service and the creation of 23,000 jobs at the UPS WorldPort hub – now the state's largest private employer.
- Revitalizing the Louisville's waterfront with the creation of Waterfront Park - an award-winning 'green front door' for the city that attracts 1.5 million visitors annually.
- Expanding the local economy by recruiting the international headquarters for YUM! Brands and Presbyterian USA and helping expand the air hub workforce at UPS, Kentucky's largest employer.
- Investing in improvements to West Main Street that set the stage for its transformation into "Museum Row" and a hot address for local businesses and non-profits.
- Creating a new neighborhood of homes and apartments in the Park DuValle neighborhood to replace old, crime-plagued public housing – often cited nationally as one of the federal Hope 6 program's greatest success stories.
- Developing partnerships with the private sector to enhance parks and green space – including an Olmsted Parks Conservancy and Operation Brightside.

Abramson has earned regional and national accolades for his leadership:

**2005** – Kentucky's best civic leader for a record fifth time by *Kentucky Monthly* magazine

**2003** – Local Public Official of the Year by *Governing* magazine

**1993** – President of the U.S. Conference of Mayors and recipient of the conference's Distinguished Public Service Award, given to just 13 others in 50 years

**1987** –Top 20 Mayors in America, *U.S. News & World Report*

**1986** – Top 25 Most Dynamic Mayors in America, *Newsweek*

Jerry Abramson is a lifelong resident of Louisville. Born east of downtown Louisville where his family operated a neighborhood grocery, he attended public schools and went on to receive a Bachelor of Science/Business Economics degree from Indiana University, and a law degree from Georgetown University in Washington, D.C.

Abramson served two years in the U.S. Army from 1969-1971 and was awarded the Army Commendation Medal for Meritorious Service. He was elected twice to Louisville's Board of Aldermen and served as General Counsel to Kentucky Governor John Y. Brown, while practicing law as a partner with the Louisville firm of Greenebaum Doll and McDonald LLC.

After completing three terms as Louisville mayor in 1998, Abramson returned to practice of law at Frost Brown Todd LLC, one of the region's largest law firms, and taught government classes at Bellarmine University. He also formed The Abramson Group, specializing in urban and regional economic development and business strategies.

He is married to Madeline Abramson. They have a son, Sidney.